

WETLANDS – WHAT ARE THEY GOOD FOR?

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Wetlands are Important

- ▣ Wetlands are special areas in the landscape where there is water at or near the soil surface for all or much of the year
- ▣ Long-term presence of water leads to unique communities that are specially adapted to saturated conditions



Changing Wetlands Changes the Landscape

- ❑ Wetlands are situated in the landscape because of the way that water flows
- ❑ When nature or humans change wetlands or the flow of water, the landscape changes too
- ❑ Examples:
 - Hurricanes
 - Sea Level Rise
 - Development



There are Many Types of Wetlands

- ▣ Coastal – marshes, bays, mud/sand flats
- ▣ Inland – wooded swamps, wet meadows, bogs, ponds/pools
- ▣ Seasonal - not wet all year, but provide critical functions at certain times
- ▣ Created – used to help filter pollutants from stormwater around built areas or wastewater after primary treatment

Coastal Mud Flat and Marsh





Inland Cypress Swamp

Inland Carolina Bay



Seasonal – Carolina Bay



Isolated



Stormwater Wetlands



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We Should Care about what Wetland Do

- ▣ Water storage
- ▣ Water filtration
- ▣ Shoreline protection
- ▣ Nursery for fish/shellfish
- ▣ Recreation and aesthetics



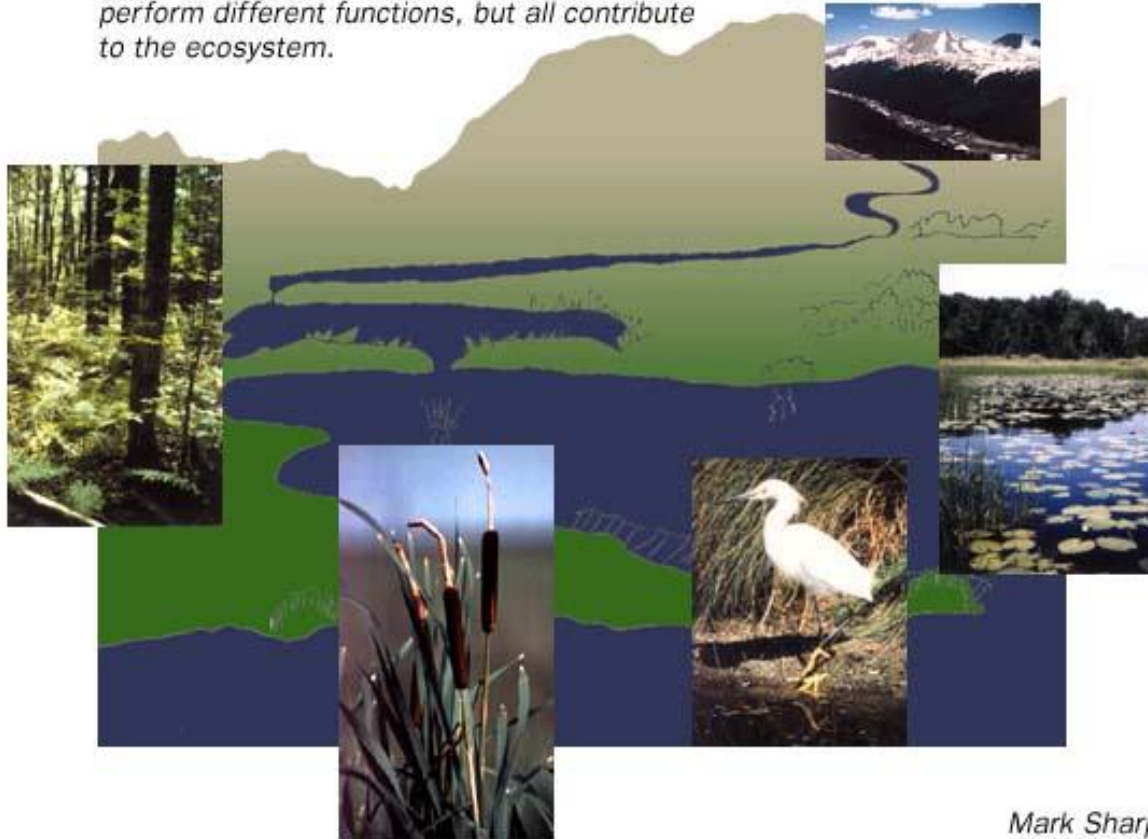
Many Aspects Define Where Wetlands Occur

- ▣ Topography and slope
- ▣ Climate
- ▣ Soil type
- ▣ Plant types
- Water table
- Flow patterns
- Water chemistry



The Watershed Approach Provides a Way to View Wetlands

As water, sediments, and nutrients move through the watershed, different wetlands perform different functions, but all contribute to the ecosystem.



Mark Sharp

- ▣ Addresses connections between water, land, and wetlands
- ▣ More complete solutions to account for many factors causing loss of wetlands

We are Losing Wetlands

- ▣ Estimated 50% loss in US and worldwide
 - Agriculture and silviculture
 - Urban development
 - Rural development
- ▣ Rate of loss is declining, but assessment methods changed
- ▣ Factors leading to loss reduction:
 - Regulatory protection and enforcement
 - Education and outreach
 - Elimination of drainage incentives (agriculture)
 - Monitoring and protection
 - Restoration projects



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We Can Live with Wetlands

- ▣ Wetlands are important amenities and need care
- ▣ Don't:
 - Fill, drain, excavate, or clear vegetation
 - Fertilize or spray
 - Intentionally flood or divert water to lower water table
 - Cover or encroach with buildings or structures
- ▣ Do:
 - Use buffers – 35-300 feet
 - Reduce disturbed soil and pavement
 - Stabilize eroding shorelines with native vegetation
 - Provide native wildlife habitat



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- ❑ Water and wetlands and natural resources are critical to our economic health and quality of life
- ❑ Remaining wetlands are valuable

Questions?

